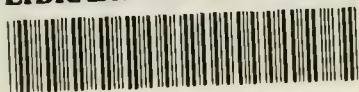


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PAGAN SONNETS

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BY

JOHN MYERS O'HARA

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PORTLAND MAINE
SMITH & SALE
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TO
JOHN LEWIS HERVEY

“ **A**LL passes. Art alone
Enduring stays to us;
The bust outlives the throne,
The coin, Tiberius.

“ Even the gods must go;
Only the lofty rhyme
Not countless years o'erthrow
Nor long array of time.”

[THANKS ARE DUE FOR PERMISSION TO REPRINT
CERTAIN SONNETS IN THIS VOLUME TO *The*
Bookman, *Metropolitan Magazine*, *Munsey's*
Magazine, AND *Smart Set*.]

JE suis un homme des temps Homériques;
le monde ou je vis n'est pas le mien, et
je ne comprends rien la société qui m'entoure.
Le Christ n'est pas venu pour moi; je
suis aussi païen qu' Alcibiade et Phidias.
Je n'ai jamais été cueillir sur le Golgotha
les fleurs de la passion, et le fleuve profond
qui coule du flanc du crucifié et fait une
ceinture rouge au monde, ne m'a pas baignée
de ses flots; mon corps rebelle ne veut point
reconnaitre la suprématie de l'ame, et ma
chair n'entend point qu'on la mortifie. Je
trouve la terre aussi belle que la ciel, et je ne
pense que la correction de la forme est la
vertu.

— THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.



THAT symbol for the sonnet, vestal Nine?
Jewel or beaker? or a fairer still?
Come, haunters of the Heliconian hill,
And deign the cincture for this gem of thine!
Ah, yield the cup the lips of love propine,
As Hebe's goblet of ambrosial thrill;
The sonnet's golden beaker poets fill
With fire of soul, a vintage more divine.
Jewel the heart might hoard! or beaker dipped
By auric anses to the chrismal mouth!
Rayed with the North or vintaged with the South,
A fetter o'er the soul it might be slipped;
Or glow, the brimming chalice fate ordained
To some great love, that never may be drained.

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PAGAN SONNETS

THE PUBLISHERS WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITH
THANKS THE AUTHOR'S KINDNESS FOR PERMISSION
TO USE THE TEXT OF HIS PRIVATELY PRINTED
EDITION.

INSPIRATION

RAW nearer still and wrap me in thy flame!
Etherealize my body, lift my soul
On some wild wind to Song's supernal goal,
O rapture of the spirit poets claim!
Lighten the feet of fancy that are lame;
Unbind the mortal gyves, for I would snatch
Talaria no Ankle-Winged could match,
Filch from the gods their fire and bear the blame.
And I with pinions emulous of thine,
Eagle of Jove, that circles the divine,
Would rise to wider vision, face to face,
With deity in empyrean space;
Lift to the stars my prayer for beauty's light,
Standing in pride on Song's transcendent height.

ART

CARVE calm thy dream and leave no tragic stress
Of mortal pain to mar it, but the mood
Serene of Art's eternal attitude,
Its marble equipoise, the passionless!
Restrain the line that trembles on excess,
And let no vital groove of grief intrude;
Accord each contour thy solicitude,
Bid all the curves of beauty coalesce.
High dreams, that dare the absolute, repose
In plastic peace! Angelo's Day and Night
Limned, dawn and dusk, with faint Etruscan rose;
That temple's Phidian frieze, where troops the bright
Pageant of Hellas' glory; and that dream
Of thy own soul, seeking the clue supreme.

THE HUSHED GODS

LORN are the ways from old illusion won,
A sense of loss through all the woodland floats;
No sylvan now in myrtle thicket dotes,
For any timid oread to shun;
Here tells no tousled glade of satyr fun,
Nor winding path where fauns crossed waving oats;
No distant piping of delirious notes,
No vine-strewed tracks of Bacchic revel, none!
Where are the satyrs dear to genial Pan,
The oreads that bathe in Dian's pool?
The jocund woodland horde, half goat, half man,
The coy and fair of Daphne's coverts cool?
Of all who worshipped once and once believed,
Glow no Hellenic heart yet undeceived?

TANAGRA

“Give back the upward looking and the light”

OUT of Tanagra's old necropolis,
And from the grudging clutch of time, the joy
Of Hellas, in this shepherd girl and boy,
Laughs lightward from oblivion's abyss;
Supine, with limbs and lips that twine and kiss,
Caresses that uncleaving never cloy,
The youth of earth is rife in these uncoy
Figures of terra-cotta, born to bliss.
Earth-loving and intuitive, the Greek
Learned, long ago, the wisdom that we seek;
Weary of worship for the noumenon,
We turn from Calvary to Helicon;
From subtle introspection to the free
And soul-uncaring life of Arcady.

AQUÆ RELIGIO

MY soul revolts at that ascetic Sign,
The Cross whose pity stifled Pagan glee;
A strain of pride, imperial in me,
Acclaims an alien heritage as mine.
I would, in purple of the Palatine,
The body's apotheosis decree;
The pristine creed of carnal purity,
Whose only fane is plastic beauty's shrine.
Oh, I would be, at Diocletian's Baths,
An athlete, clean of body, sure of soul;
Emerging from the stadium to stroll,
Symmetrical of limb, the shaded paths;
And watch the sun a deeper bronze emboss
The torso of Apoxyomenos.

VESPASIAN'S CIRCUS

VAST canopies across its crater bloat,
Whose shadows splash the sand with purple light;
The tiered arena's waving girth of white
Vents roar on roar, as from one bellowing throat;
Cresting the din, cries of the jungle float,
Mad howl of rage and scream of ferine fright;
Turmoil and dust, and beasts in mangled might,
While over all the grave Augustans gloat.
Under their juttied bastion, tumult-tamed,
The embers of the combat in his eye,
Licking his bloody jaws, a wild dog slinks;
And where the Cæsar's flambeaus flare, a maimed
Mammoth in frenzy sweeps his trunk on high
And hurls against the wall a writhing lynx.

AN OLD COIN

ROME'S tyrant may have spun thee, coin of yore,
And on thy fall a lesser empire lost;
Perchance Poppea fingered, Lucan tossed
Thee to a dancer; or, in search of lore,
Petronius paid thee for a scroll that bore
Some ode from Mitylene. Thou hast crossed
The Stygian stream, an obol for the mossed
Hand of old Charon, fare for Hades' shore.
Now dull, decipherless, and green with blight,
Tombed in a musty tray, the passing heed
Alone of some devout numismatist;
Worthless to banish pain, to buy delight,
Such fate is thine, outlingering Pagan greed,
Dead barter of dead millions dust-abysed.

THE LATIN SEA

THE wonder of its blue is under us;
We see, with glamor of Homeric lore,
Shimmer the wave that lured Ulysses' oar
And Jason faring for the fabulous.
Yon trellised slopes were thine, Theocritus!
And those trim galleys, bound for Capri's shore,
Dart from the cove and follow, as of yore,
The burnished trireme of Tiberius.
Hellas and Rome, templed antiquity,
Looming along thy shore, O Latin sea,
Live once again beneath the dreaming glance;
Around thee clings the virgin world's romance;
And there, beyond the Pillars of Hercules,
Glimmers the Isle of the Hesperides.

HADRIAN'S VILLA

GREEN lizards glide along the grass where erst
Acanthus-carved and rose-entwined, the three
Pergolas gleamed in rival harmony;—
Vista of marble gods forsaken first
For adolescence that Bithynia nursed;
The curled cup-bearer of his dream that he
Later invested with divinity,
Grieving for that fair boy the Nile immersed.
Art's regal devotee, he strove to sate
His soul, ravished with Hellas, to the core;
Cities of gold from dust to recreate
Dazzled his ardor, avid to adore
Temple and statue; and, half amorous,
Even the beauty of Antinoüs.

HELIOGABALUS

THE Fates that hold, imperial Androgyne,
Even the doom of those immortal, made
The girlish flush suffuse thy cheek and laid
Upon thy pouting lips the drench of wine!
Above thy brow they massed the festucine
Tresses and bound them with a mitra's braid;
And in thy eyes, O Mime of sex, essayed
To throne the glamor of the Erycine.
Through all the years that were, the years to be,
Insoluble the riddle epicene;
Nature must falter or the deity
When soul and sex but join to contravene.
Answer and tell us from the realm of Dis,
Heliogabalus and Semiramis!

CAIA'S STAR

YON star is thine! climbing the Roman skies,
Above the Appian Way, as fair of light
As when Caius and Caia knew the night;
Yes, thine the storied star that lustrous lies
And nestles low between the secret sighs
Of Night's black bosom; as a jewel might
Cradled on some bare ebon breast, requite
Its dove-warm couch with diamonded surprise.
Yon star is thine! but nearer is a gem
Of astral worth, half hidden from my gaze;
Under the scarf, as filmy as a haze,
It lifts its balmy dual diadem;
My star! your heart, whose wild pulsations claim
Mine, burden sweet, as flame that flows on flame.

ÆGEAN IDYL

HIGH on the summit of Æolic hills,
Above the sweep of amethystine seas,
White pillars print their slender symmetries
Against a sky the green of twilight fills;
Up from the water comes a breeze that chills;
And near the verge, two nubile devotees,
Vestals of Aphrodite's temple, ease
Their hearts' restrained desire whose pathos thrills.
Silent they stand, caressingly, and dream
With eyes that tell, veiled in the vague and far,
The immanence of immolating bliss;
Eager, with cheeks that pale, to catch the gleam,
Faint on the sea, of Vesper's votive star,
Herald of night and the creative kiss.

CORINTH

MARBLE and gold, through all her amplitude
Of temples that allure, the Isthmus queen
And siren of the cities Lampsacene
Burns in her beauty, insolent of mood;
Wafting afar her musk and myrrh, and wooed
Of all the fawning world, she basks serene;
Desire, as incense, floats around her seen
Upon her thoral throne, divinely nude.
Corinth! The word is memory to his ear!
He journeys back, the heart's anabasis;
Turning the street, the temple steps are near—
Run to thy lover, Anasyrtolis!
Tears for Adonis? all thy roses sere?
Long didst thou wait, flower-girl of Argolis!

ANADYOMENE

(After the painting by Cabanel)

L O, the ineffable form their dream extolled,
When her white temples crowned the cliffs and drew
Pale devotees whose hearts invoked the true
Daughter of God that Sappho hymned of old ;
Beauty whose vision, wrought serenely bold,
With love's revering eyes they yearned to view ;
The carnal grace whose sway their wisdom knew,
The suaver line than their ephobic mold.
And now, as ravished Greeks, our eyes behold
Her limbs cleave curving to their natal blue ;
Her hair, whose every tress the sea-winds woo,
Flow free along the foam in lustrous gold ;
While conscious of the life that thrills her through,
Soft to adoring Loves her lids unfold.

ANAKTORIA

O GOLDEN girl, beloved of Sappho, met
In many a dream made fervid with her face,
Æolic Song has wreathed around a vase,
Votive to love and thee, its long regret ;
Hearts still upon a secret altar set
This rifted amphor whose inverted grace
Shall waft for two, through the dim chamber's space,
Strange odor of a Pagan cassolet.
To Sappho's lips thy beauty was a lyre
Leaping to virgin music under mad
Kisses that seared as sacrificial fire ;
Ritual defloration, sweet and sad ;
The rapture of its ravage and the glad
Relaxing languor of assuaged desire.

EUXANTHIS

THE wooded vales are drowsy with the heat ;
 Under the ilex' shade a satyr sleeps ;
 The myrtle moves ! Pan from the coppice peeps,
And flutes a note to Syrinx, melic sweet.
Far in the forest's heart the branches meet
 Above the dryad's pool ; their shadow keeps,
 Turning to green the water's limpid deeps,
A lucent gloom to lure the sylvan feet.
Long stems and leaves of lilies aquatile
 Litter the edge and float upon the pool ;
 Broken by whim of white Euxanthis while,
Thigh-deep among their clusters, splashing cool ;
Nymph of the supple loins, who rests to snare
 A dripping garland in her orange hair.

THE FLAMING HEART

*“Byron stood on the shore and beheld a flame of marvelous
beauty rise heavenward from the dead poet’s heart”*

ARE those ridge-forests groves of Ilian fir
 A down whose moaning tops the night winds run?
 Is that immobile watcher Thetis’ son,
That burning fragrance cinerary myrrh?
Do large libations to the gods aver,
 Poured round that pyre, the vanquished Myrmidon;
 Or sleeps some weary child of Helicon,
Old organ-throated sea his thurifer?
Diviner he, than lorn Achilles lost
 In grief and shadow on the waveward sand,
 Who sees the flame, by the mad mistral fanned,
Feed on the heart the restful hand had crossed;
And glutted to the full of its desire,
 Thrill golden with the dead companion fire.

A BURIAL URN

L ONG since he carved thee revel-wreathed that thou
Mightst laugh at Thanatos with flute and flower;
And toy with destiny until the hour
It gave the dust thy heart is keeping now;
Fond dust that erst was warm from foot to brow;
Rescued from dissolution and the worm
To claim from thee, after a cycle's term,
An ultimate and meet sepulchral vow.
Less cherished wert thou, shape symmetrical,
For all thy circling joy of nymphs and these
Consoling verses of Phocylides —
Yea, the white virtue of such burial!
Did not the treasure of her ashes rest,
A mournful secret, in thy marble breast.

THE RACE

EVER I follow where the vision fled ;
Match stride with stride, virile and swift as when
After the fleet white-limbed Ionienne,
Hippomenes, straining each muscle, sped ;
Ever the glimmer of her feet ahead ;
Ever the flying garment, as a mist
Floating around her, trailed by knee and wrist ;
Ever the grace, revealed and coveted.
Not thine, O Love, the race ! nor thine to fling
Unseen the golden apple of delay ;
No artifice can any goddess bring
To crown me victor, at the goal, to-day ;—
Endless the race the tireless runners make !
Lost Self that Self may never overtake.

A GREEK FRIEZE

AS figures, on a frieze processional,
In marble march across the metope
Of some old temple to eternity
Go golden-stained of time's smooth kiss, so all
Those loves that carved for life its coronal
File slow across the flame of dreams for me;
And I, as senile Casanova, see
Each profile flower and fade, and shadow fall.
They pass with gaze oblivious of mine
That singles those undying passion knew;
She, tigress-orbed, whose sin was blight malign
To youth's high thought; and she, once regnant through
Her lips' red luxury; and she, who drew
My soul to her with song as to a shrine.

MELEAGER

TWINE me a garland, such as Diocles
Once welcomed from thy hand, O Gadarene!
Whose leaves of laurel intertwine their green
With flowers that symbol Song's divinities.
Erinna's crocus, sweet to Attic bees,
Nearest to Sappho's glowing rose should lean;
And lilies of Anyte bloom between
The golden wheat-sprays of Bacchylides.
But rather would I breathe the lover's flowers
Culled languid at the tryst in dreaming hours;
The wreath of dill for Heliodora's hair,
Or reddest rose for Demo's bosom bare;
Or a fresh nosegay for Zenophila
From the sea-garden of thy Syria.

A TEAR BOTTLE

O SLENDER bauble, where her grief was told!
Long emptied of the drops that slowly slid
Through the clasped fingers, o'er the languid lid,
To fill thy frigid heart and grow as cold;
What ruthless hand with sacrilege was bold
To pillage thus her burial pyramid;
And thee unseal, her sorrow's slave, and bid
Thy crystal shrine yield up its tribute gold?
Some grief memorial thou mightst avow!
Were thine the tears the girl for Cæsar shed?
Or when, in dire alarm, the sails were spread
And turned from Antony her galley's prow?
Or were they love's last pledge to him when brow
And bust were prone, and Egypt's siren dead?

THE FLAGELLANT

UNDER her lashes lurk the flames that flash
Sorcerous glamor of the basilisk ;
Her heavy hair, wound in a tawny disk,
Unloosens as their brooding glances clash ;—
Race, creed and clime are waived for fancies rash ;
He lolls a sultan, while with silken whisk
Her robes fall free, and she, an odalisque,
Shrinks nude before him, fearful of the lash.
And she, of regal mien, must ever be
The sobbing prey of this perverted dream ;
And he, supine to base obsession, see
Her tears a spur, the cruel whip supreme ;
And the red welt across her shoulders gleam
Where his long kiss knew no satiety.

A JEWESS

THE Bible sirens wield their wanton spell
And peer, derisive rebels, from her face;
Though vestal eyes rebuke these specters base,
Their lure imbrues her lips of rodomet.
Assyrian of soul, she scorns to quell
Each mocking wraith that fleers a moment's space;
The lids droop languid with Delilah's grace,
Around the mouth the wiles of Myrrha dwell.
Erewhile a rhythmic tremor seems to pass
From throat to heel, and by the thrill betrayed
She takes the dancer's posture to persuade;
The satin glints, as girdle and cuirass,
And veils the nympholeptic throe that swayed
The supple daughter of Herodias.

THE MUEZZIN

BELOW the walls of Bagdad sinks the sun!
Long glows strike red the ways that dusk concealed,
Like flame reflected from a brazen shield;
In purple adumbration loom as one
The cedared slopes that fading splendors shun.
Far date-palms rise in burnished bloom revealed;
The camels shamble khanward cushion-heeled,
Laden with spice from distant Koordistun.
Sundown and prayer hour in the town antique!
And toward the caliph's mosque, what chanting sound?
"Allah il Allah!" fall the accents meek,
A petal-drift of prayer that sinks around.
My eyes the minareted dervish seek
As turbaned foreheads near me touch the ground.

THE GHEBER

I
N necromantic mood I wheel my seat
To face the cannel glowing in the grate;
I stir the coals to read what message fate,
In flames I free from bondage, may secrete;
Fire-sibyls leap and writhe and vanish fleet,
Beckon the devotee with smile elate,
Or flash upon the wall their shadowy hate;
While I, content to let illusion cheat,
Half sunk in slumber, dimly note a change;
The room expands, dark slaves are at the door,
The sacred flames forsake their humbler range
And, throned on brazen altars, scorn the floor;
And turbaned, bearded, garbed in vesture strange,
I salaam to the fire-god and adore.

A VENETIAN WINE GLASS

A SHIFTING curve of iris color e'er
Irradiates it, niched in shadow grim;
With graceful shape that tapers amphor-trim
It foils the dusk and shimmers debonair;
Once chattel of some Tuscan palace where,
Against the random sunray amber dim,
Colonna's vintage sparkling to its brim
Warmed passionate breasts to banquet mirth laid bare.
Around its rim might lurk a secret sere,
Ghost of a golden voice that mocked and laughed;
"From this fair cup my tragic story hear;
With youth's red lips, ere yet the wiser quaffed,
I drank to him and knew, too late to fear,
The Borgia mixed for me the poison draught."

AT RIMINI

SOME soul of fire, that scorched the ashen past,
Again incarnate! Egypt? Nay, not she;
Nor Dido, nor that high divinity
Of Song that Lesbos knew. A pride less vast
Cinctured this heart's impulsive strength that cast
Law off for love; a fate than theirs less free
Of scope for love's untamed intensity,
And tragic power to whelm the world aghast.
Fettered to flesh once more, Francesca's soul
In this Italian flower-girl's lowly lot,
Black-orbed and unabashed, of death's red goal
And love's resistless sway remembers not.
This is the garden of their guilt, the spot
Where to the fatal tryst they trembling stole.

A SPIDER

MY bust of Byron and a nude antique,
United never in my idlest thought,
His predal skill a Cupid-net has wrought,
Plighting the poet to the sculptured Greek.
Astride his snare that glistens satin-sleek,
Intently wary for the witless gnat,
Alert to strike, and crafty as a cat,
He checks the flight of many a winging freak.
O boyhood's fiery bard! thy lordly brow
This vandal has profaned; and all thy pride,
Once swiftest to resent, is passive now;
And the white nymph of Hellas, at thy side,
Is docile, too; and he, the jester base
Of Art and Song, binds her in thy embrace.

LAFCADIO HEARN

"Peace to thee, Lafcadio, child of Erin and Hellas"

ETERNAL peace, Lafcadio, be thine!
Rest well in that far land of old Japan;
O indefatigable artisan,
Poet whose vision verged on the divine!
No more beneath the shoji eglantine
Shalt thou discern the moon on Fuji San;
Or hearken, only as a lover can,
The patter of her Nippon chioppine.
Blessing thy tomb the stone Bosatsu sits,
Symbol of resignation, and at dusk
Around the dreaming god the firefly flits;
And from the temple, through the drifting musk
Of cherry blooms, the bonze's bell that tolls
Calls thee from Kamo, over the River of Souls.

EPHEMERÆ

THY feral fancy, morbid for the nonce,
 Roving the past on retrospection's wings,
 Strives vainly to defer the doom of things
Like a spent candle waning in the sconce.
An insect, creeping up the nymph that vaunts
 The bronze abandon of her beauty, brings
 Alone to thought, while disillusion clings,
Abortive lives whose viscid envy haunts.
They trailed on thee, though spurned, their little slime,
 As the vile worm across an exquisite
 Marble of Hellas, mellow-tinged of time ;
Unmarked in Art's immeasurable light,
The myriad ignoble that have gone
 As dust brushed downward to oblivion.

CREPUSCULINE

I DYLLIC fair in some secluded seat,
Some ingle-nook of half translucent gloom,
With restful thoughts like flowers of faint perfume
Heart-sensed in pensive introspection sweet;
So one would dream to find you—dream complete—
Musing at dusk in some myth-haunted room,
Where gracious ghosts at fancy's mandate loom
To lay the gifts of genius at your feet.
Loved books should be about you—silence reign;
A rose as white in hands that interlace,
With music breathing art a spirit strain;
Then some companion soul to pause apace,
Entranced as Tasso when Ferrara's vain
Divine perfection touched him with its grace.

A HAUNTED ROOM

HERE was love's parting ; that regretful hour
Passed into memory here—naught, naught is new ;
Still slanting light athwart a vase of blue
A gladiolus lifts its scarlet flower.
There is the mem'ored nook, the mimic tower
Of cherished books, the window seat for two ;
And there, as in the days I deemed her true,
The mantel group of shapes Medusan glower.
The place is sentient of her—everything—
Each object that her beauty loveless left
When from the room, still sobbing low, she passed ;
There on the threshold yet, half lingering,
I see her pause, as one of hope bereft,
Who still delays the look she knows the last.

FAME

DIVINE as some forgiving fate she stands,
Whose purpose baffled, tragic godship waived,
Suffers the hope that held her heart enslaved
To steal the waiting vengeance from her hands;
While, long marooned, from memory's arid strands
Drifts to her eyes in tears the old appeal;
Her lips, reclaiming pity's trembling seal,
Proffer the kiss of pardon love commands.
What art could add to nature's gift, was hers
The master sway where all emotion lies,
In depth of tenderness no words may name;
Though aspiration's virgin whisper spurs,
And, beckoning her, down fancy's vista flies
Atalanta-like the shining shape of Fame.

A SOAP BUBBLE

SLOWLY it moves away, a sphere of dew
Whose vibrant motion in the lucent air
Denies perfection to its contour fair;
And where no evanescent tints renew
Their opal streaks, it takes a sapphire hue;
Soon will the fitful breeze its poise impair
And wafting it to some ethereal lair,
My eyes shall lose it in the upper blue.
But should the breeze be blithe and over-bold
Its breath will pierce and break the shining sphere;
Alas, such is its destiny, to veer
Swiftly and burst!—O bubble-theme of gold!
My dream, whose frailer splendor must expire
Even as this, and fold its wings of fire.

ADOLESCENCE

LET the Muse lead thee as a trusting child
To Hippocrene, upon the sacred mountain;
Eager to drink, prone at the limpid fountain,
With thirsting lips the water undefiled;
And thou wilt drown thy grieving in the wild
Sea's vaster woe; or from the lark's dominion,
Win lyric strength to leap on upward pinion
And revel in the blue; or dream-beguiled
Down ways of tangled hedge and arching vines,
Refingering the reed of Arcady,
Shut from thyself the dolorous lot of man;
Hearing, enamored still, the voice of Pan
In the insistent sighing of the pines
And the remoter music of the sea.

MENDELSSOHN'S SPRING SONG

L IKE lark-elated notes that drift and dream
Across a dawn of gold, its lyric stress
Of music's unimagined tenderness
Stirs the heart's void to rapture. Still supreme,
Love sweeps forgotten chords that swiftly glide
To old remembrance; vanished fervors glow;
And the dead sorrows tremble up but go
No deeper now than painless tears abide.
O bird-blithe voice, ecstatic utterance!
Lost in the radiant blue of cherished things
Our thoughts catch flame and, with a flash of wings,
Reclaim the olden visions that entrance;
Skies break in blue above the somber day,
The woods of youth wave green against the grey.

PRINTEMPS NOCTURNE

TALL lances of the poplars guard the Seine,
Whose curves, eccentric silver, wind away ;
And where their distant gleam grows dim with day
The vesper glow has faded to a stain.
The lilac clusters at the window wane
To vaguer purple, blending spray and spray ;
And breathe the heart with odor, as they sway,
A morbid sense of some forgotten pain.
The rainy gust, along the vernal night,
Bending the poplars in a single line
As tall ascetics at a sacred rite,
Surges across the lilacs that repine ;
The drooping clusters part their blooms and swing
Like scented censers at the shrine of Spring.

THE TWILIGHT POOL

A FURTIVE shadow from the nearer trees
Troubles the water with a grey regard;
All day its placid mood was left unmarred
Nor ruffled with the breath of any breeze;
A magic mirror, sensitive to seize
Skies that the crimson spears of dawn had scarred;
And now, ere somber gates of dusk are barred,
The silver vesper's paler pageantries.
The shade that lengthens from the leaning pine
Across its surface sends a sudden chill;
Stray tremors, at the edge, in red define
The sinking chalice on the distant hill;
Whence the last glory of the sun will spill
Over its fluid heart the flush of wine.

ADAGIO LAMENTOSO

MY soul was shaken with orchestral grief!
Defiant cry of pain Promethean
Through the vast clash of winds and brasses ran
With surge crescendo; slowly from belief
In triumph to despair, between the brief
Moan of the violins, all tones began
To sink and languish; ending fainter than
The flute-note falling softer than a leaf.
Then almost silence! from a shred of sound
The flute's wail rose, and with a throb subdued
The violins took up the low refrain;
And like a voice, calling from depths profound,
Eerie and far, despair's incertitude,
Floated the sigh of that harmonic pain.

VALOR

NOT now, my soul, must thou turn craven thing,
And cede thy conquered lands as death's domain!
Are life's grim fields of battle void of gain
And the old reckless ardor wavering?
No fear to thee should any menace bring;
The world's grey lies fell foiled from thy disdain,
Its blades of hate have met thy steel in vain;
An epinikion is thine to sing!
What! like a boy to blanch with battle fear
Nor chafe the hours that lag before the fray?
I scorn the thought as Spartan would the sin.
My blood mounts bold as creeps the conflict near,
And lone upon that last Thermopylæ,
I wait the combat none may hope to win.

THE PAGAN END

BE mine thy final boon, O furnace bed!
Where the consuming element may make,
Rather than slow decay, my dust forsake
The form that life has left untenanted;
Be mine the fairer Pagan end when dead.
Soon as the purifying flame may slake
Its zealot thirst upon my body, take
That dust, then dreamless all, where oft I led
Your feet along the cliffs whose frowning wall
Holds at its barrier base the beating waves;
There cast my ashes, dear, for I would be
A part of that we loved to hear and see;
Then day and night my voice may seem to call
Soft with the sea's, or madly when it raves.

FINIS





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